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Graduates of D.C. Superior's drug court celebrated at ceremony

By Keith L. Alexander May 20

It was an emotional day in courtroom C-10 of D.C. Superior Court Wednesday as graduates of the court's drug intervention classes participated in the court's annual commencement ceremony.

Acting U.S. Attorney Vincent Cohen Jr., D.C. Attorney General Karl A. Racine, several D.C. Superior Court judges and officials greeted the nine graduates. After the five men and four women received their diplomas, Cohen pulled out a court file and announced that each of their drug cases were dismissed.

"Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Live it well," Judge Gregory E. Jackson told the graduates.

With family members and friends of the graduates filling the seats to cheer on their loved ones, the courtroom sounded more like a high school or college graduation. Lakesha Randolph, 39, had numerous arrests dating back to 2004 for PCP possession. Randolph, who was in tears, said if it wasn't for the program, "I would be dead."



D.C. Attorney General Karl A. Racine (Linda Davidson/The Washington Post)

Randolph said Jackson and other leaders of the program seemed dedicated to her and her classmates' sobriety.

"PCP became my life," she said. "I've been arrested so many times and been through so many programs, but Judge Jackson told us we were his children and that he cared about his children. And if he cared about us, why should we not care about ourselves."